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ART. V. — 1. *British America*. By JOHN MCGREGOR, Esq. In two volumes. William Blackwood, Edinburgh, and T. Cadell, Strand, London. 1833.

2. *Narrative of an Expedition through the Upper Mississippi to Itasca Lake, the actual Source of this River, embracing an Exploratory Trip through the St. Croix and Burntwood Rivers, in 1832. Under the Direction of Henry R. Schoolcraft*. New York. Harper and Brothers. 1834.

WE do not propose to institute an examination of the works whose titles we have prefixed to this paper. Mr. Schoolcraft's book is confined mainly to topographical observations, and sketches of Indian character and languages. The work of Mr. McGregor, which is all that good paper and the English press could have made it, embraces a full account of the history and resources of the British possessions in North America. We shall avail ourselves of its aid, in throwing together some facts, relating to the history of Canada.

When, as long ago as the sixteenth century, the principal monarchs of Europe turned their attention to the new-found world in the West, the precious metals, which were supposed to abound in the northern parts of this continent, as well as in Mexico, Peru, and Brazil, were the objects which first stimulated their enterprise. When, however, no gold, silver, or gems were discovered in the soil, the dominion of the country became an aim of national ambition, and adventurers of great perseverance and hardihood were found willing to prosecute their schemes for that end. Ever since its discovery, this particular region of the country has been the theatre of striking vicissitudes, which have been set forth in a prominent light, in the works of Hakluyt, Hennepin, La Hontan, Charlevoix, and succeeding writers, who have advanced into the north-western wilderness, for their own purposes, or those of their King.

Our first account of this region dates from the second voyage of Jacques Cartier, eighty-five years before the Pilgrims of New England landed on Plymouth Rock. At the solicitation of Chabot, who was then Admiral of France, Cartier, then a master mariner of St. Malo, received a commission of discovery from Francis the First, the French King, for the pur-

pose of establishing a colony in North America. In April, 1534, he set sail from St. Malo for that object, with only two vessels of small tonnage. Having reached Newfoundland near Cape Bonavista, sailed along the bank, and explored the Gulf of St. Lawrence, he was obliged from unforeseen circumstances to return, and arrived at St. Malo on the 15th of August of the same year. From the favorable account which Cartier gave of his voyage, he was commissioned the following year, with the command of three ships of large size, equipped with all the necessary outfits, and he embarked on the 19th of May, for the same enterprise. In July, the ships reached the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Cartier advanced up the river to the Island of *Hochelaga*, where Montreal now stands. It was then inhabited by a tribe of the Hurons. He was hospitably received by the natives, although the Indians at the Island of Orleans had opposed his passage up the river St. Lawrence to that point. Erecting a cross and shield emblazoned with the arms of France, the emblem of the state and church, denoting that the French King was the rightful discoverer of the country, he named it *New France*. On the 5th of October, Cartier left the village of Hochelaga, and wintered somewhere on the River St. Croix. During the next summer he returned to France, and no projects of colonization were carried out until four years afterwards.

In 1540, François de la Roque, Seigneur de Roberval, received a charter from Francis the First, which covered the whole of this region, and invested him with all the power claimed by the King within its bounds. During the summer of that year, Roberval sailed for America with a squadron of five vessels, under the naval command of Cartier. This voyage was made without accident, and a fort was erected on some part of the coast, now unknown, of which Cartier was left commandant. Having suffered from the severity of the season, and the enmity of the Indians, who, it seems, at that time considered the white men intruders, he soon embarked his colony for France. On his way back, he met Roberval upon the Banks of Newfoundland, with vessels laden with men, provisions, and arms, and, returning with him to the fort, he resumed the command, while Roberval sailed up the St. Lawrence. No authentic accounts, bearing directly on the exploration of Canada, for the space of sixty years from that time, have come down to us, excepting of the disastrous expedition of

the Marquis de la Roche, and the voyages of M. de Chauvin to Tadousac, about the year 1600.

At length a company of merchants at Rouen was formed by the agency of M. Pontgravé, an intelligent partner in a house at St. Malo, and M. Chatte, the Governor of Dieppe. This Company was invested with the same privileges which had before been granted to La Roche, for the purpose of exploring the country and establishing colonies along the St. Lawrence. Samuel Champlain, one of the associates, led the expedition in 1603; and in 1608, this energetic and hardy pioneer had founded the city of Quebec. Its design was to reap the profits of the fur trade; and Champlain, having selected the spot for his colonial establishment, left there a few settlers, who commenced immediately building rude huts and clearing the lands.

The foundation of the hatred of the Iroquois Confederacy toward the French, whose wars with the colonists are identified with the early history of New France, was doubtless laid at this time by Champlain. The Hurons and Algonquins were then in league against the Iroquois, and Champlain joined those nations against the latter tribes. Having explored the country, he soon returned home, and succeeded in establishing a new company, under the patronage of the Prince of Condé, who assumed the title of "Viceroy of New France." In 1612, Champlain sailed again for Canada, bringing with him four Recollets, for the conversion of the savages. In 1620, he was appointed Lieutenant under Marshal de Montmorency, who had succeeded the Prince of Condé in the viceroyalty. During that year he introduced his family into Canada, and exerted his energies in building up the French power, and in repelling the attacks of the Iroquois.

As early as 1622, the Duke de Ventadour entered into holy orders, and sent over into Canada a number of Jesuits. But dissensions soon sprung up, in the Canadian colonies, between certain Calvinists, who were associated under the Sieur de Caen in the prosecution of the fur trade, and the Catholics, which were founded as much in commercial rivalry, as in religious scruples. In consequence of these dissensions, and in order to consolidate the colonial power, Cardinal de Richelieu established the "Company of New France," in 1627. It comprised one hundred associates, who agreed to send to Canada three hundred tradesmen, and to supply them

with all necessaries and proper utensils, for three years ; after which time, they were to grant to each workman sufficient land for his support, and grain for seed. The Company also stipulated to colonize the land embraced in their charter, with six thousand emigrants, before the year 1643, and to provide each settlement with three priests, whom they were to support for fifteen years ; after which time the cleared land was to be granted to the catholic clergy for the maintenance of the church.

Certain prerogatives were at the same time reserved to the King. Among these, were religious supremacy, homage as sovereign of the country, the right of nominating the commanders of forts, and the officers of justice, and on each succession to the throne the acknowledgment of a crown of gold weighing eight marks. The Company was invested with the right of conferring titles of distinction, some of which were required to be confirmed by the King. The right to traffic in peltry, and to engage in other commerce, except the cod and whale fishery, was another privilege granted in the charter. The King of France also presented the Company with two ships of war, in consideration that the value should be refunded, if they failed to send fifteen hundred emigrants into the colonies, within the first ten years. The descendants of Frenchmen inhabiting Canada, and all savages who should be converted to the Catholic faith, were permitted to enjoy the same privileges as natural born subjects ; and all artificers sent out by the Company, who had spent six years in the French colonies, were allowed to return and settle in any trading town of France. The charter granting these privileges was designed to strengthen the power of France, in the territory which she claimed in this country, while the views of the grantees were chiefly directed to the profits of the fur trade.

M. Champlain was soon appointed Governor. For the first few years, however, the colony, from various causes connected with its remoteness from the parent government, in a trackless wilderness, and surrounded by hostile savages, was on the point of breaking down. Ships had been sent out from France with supplies ; but these were captured by an English squadron, under David Kertk. The depredations of the Iroquois also tended to cripple the energies of the colonists, until the year 1629, when they had reached the extreme point of distress. At this juncture, Kertk's force appeared

before Quebec, and compelled Champlain to surrender that fortress, and all Canada, to the English crown. The generous terms of Kertk's capitulation induced most of the French emigrants to remain ; and, in 1632, the country was restored to France by the treaty of St. Germain.

Immediately on this event, vigorous efforts were made to advance the colonization of the country. Champlain, who had been reappointed Governor, soon sailed with a squadron provided with the necessary supplies and armaments, and arrived in Canada, where he found many of the former colonists. The colonial system was better organized, and measures were adopted to reconcile existing differences, springing from the unsettled character of the emigrants, and to prevent the importation of any but individuals of fair character. In 1635, a college of the order of Jesuits was founded at Quebec, under the direction of the Marquis de Gamache ; and this institution was of some advantage in improving the morals of the people, which had fallen into a deplorable state of licentiousness. During that year the colony suffered a great misfortune in the death of Champlain. He was a man of energetic character, and clear judgment. He had embarked in the enterprise of colonization with a stout heart, and ardent zeal. A brave officer, and a scientific seaman, his keen forecast discerned, in the magnificent resources of the Northwest, the elements of a mighty empire of which he hoped to be the founder. By his explorations of the country, he had contributed valuable knowledge of its resources, and had not only encountered the savages with signal success, but by his counsels, had strengthened the arms of the desponding.* On the death of Champlain, M. Montmagny was appointed governor. Although he entered into the views of his predecessor, Montmagny did not possess the ripe experience and practical knowledge requisite to carry out the projects of Champlain, and the successful prosecution of the fur trade was the only token of energy under his administration.

About this time a number of religious institutions were established in Canada, ostensibly for the conversion of the Indians, but doubtless as a part of the state machinery to strengthen the French colonial power. In 1636 a Catholic

* In one of his first expeditions he discovered the lake which bears his name.

seminary, for the instruction of the savages, was founded at Sillery, a few miles above Quebec, and placed under the direction of three nuns from Dieppe, who were sent out by the Duchesse d'Arguillon. The convent of St. Ursula was established at Quebec, by Madame de la Peltrie, a young widow of rank, who had engaged several sisters of the Ursuline order at Tours, with whom she sailed from Dieppe in a vessel chartered at her own expense. A seminary of the order of St. Sulpicius was also founded at Montreal. The whole island was granted by the King for its support, and it was consecrated by the Jesuits with great pomp.

The "Company of New France" did not fulfil the object of its charter. Little was done by that body, either to encourage the settlement of the country, or to advance agriculture. The attention of the ministers of the crown was diverted by those in power from the complaints of the inhabitants. Some rude forts had been erected by the French, but these were merely posts of defence, or *dépôts* of the fur trade. The energies of the people were cramped by the Iroquois, who hovered around the track of the colonists, seeking, whenever opportunity presented, to glut their settled antipathy to the French, by butchery and devastation. Montreal had in fact been attacked by the savages, and its entire destruction was prevented only by the arrival of M. d'Aillebout, with a reinforcement, in 1647. In that year the Institution of "The Daughters of the Congregation" was also founded by Marguerite Bourgeois.

In 1658, a new organization was effected in the social system of Canada. The Marquis d'Argenson was appointed Governor-General; and, during the following summer, Laval, Abbé de Montigny, titular bishop of Pétrie, arrived at Quebec, with a brief from the pope by which he was constituted Apostolic Vicar. The condition of the colony, however, continued much depressed. The Company made little exertion for its advancement, and its associates, reduced at last to the number of forty, relinquished the fur trade for the seigniorial acknowledgment of one thousand beaver skins. It was also much neglected by the parent government. The Iroquois, who had waged a destructive war upon the Hurons and Algonquins, seemed now determined to crush the power of their allies the French, and hostile bands continually harassed the French settlements. They had massacred a num-

ber of the settlers on the Island of Montreal, and kept Quebec in a continual state of alarm. While the colony was in this condition, the governor requested to be recalled on account of ill health, and in 1661, he was succeeded by the Baron d'Avangour, a man of the most inflexible energy of character. On his accession, the governor presented to the French King such favorable views of the country, as to induce him to order into the colony four hundred troops, with the necessary supplies. It was doubtless this reinforcement which saved them from entire destruction. They were placed in a condition to practise agriculture to some extent, which had before been neglected through fear of the savages, as well as from other causes, which we shall hereafter exhibit.

The "Company of New France," having failed in the object of its charter, at length surrendered it to the crown, and in 1664 its privileges were transferred to the "Company of the West Indies." The whole policy of the French colony in Canada had in fact been injudiciously framed. They had no clearly defined system of jurisprudence, and were rent into factions composed of the parties of the Governor, the Bishop, and the Jesuits, who were each anxious to undermine the power of the others. The morals of the colony were loose, a great portion of the emigrants having been furnished by the most idle and corrupt classes in France. A council was, however, soon constituted, for the administration of its affairs, consisting of the Governor-General, the Intendant-General, the Bishop, and some others, who were removable at the will of the governor. The Superior of the Jesuits presided at this council, when sitting as a court of justice. Forts were erected on the principal highways of trade, in order to keep the Iroquois in check ; and in 1668, the affairs of the colony seemed to be established on a firm basis. It had received accessions by reinforcements which arrived from the West Indies ; and a number of officers, to whom had been granted lands with the rights of *seigneurs*, settled in Canada, with their families. The morals of the people were not improved by the introduction of about three hundred women of licentious character, who were sent out by the French government. These, however, were soon disposed of in marriage.

The Count de Frontenac, a nobleman of distinguished family, and of the most arbitrary but vigorous character, was soon

invested with the administration of Canada. He made extraordinary efforts to develop the resources of the country, and to build up the French colonial establishments. At that period, the territory along the Lakes Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior, was explored; a portion of the Hurons was settled at Michilimackinac, by Father Marquette; and a part of the Iroquois, who had been converted to the Catholic faith, were established at St. Louis, near Montreal. A council of the principal chiefs in that quarter was also held at the Falls of St. Mary, which resulted in a stipulation that the French should occupy that post; and a cross was erected there bearing the arms of France.

Expeditions for discovery were also despatched about this time for the remote west. In 1672, M. Falon, a former Intendant-General, who had done important service to the French government by extending its power to the distant points of Canada, understood, from reports of the Indians, that a great river, called by them *Michi-sépée*, flowed in a southerly direction through the extreme western wilderness. To ascertain this point, he employed M. Joliet, a citizen of Quebec, and Father Marquette, who had travelled into the Indian country, and as a missionary was qualified to gain the confidence of the savages. They proceeded to Lake Michigan, crossed the country to the River Wisconsin, and descended it until they reached the Mississippi. Floating down the stream in a canoe, they soon arrived at some Indian villages of the Illinois tribe, and were treated with hospitality by the savages. They then passed over to Arkansas. Having become convinced that the Mississippi flowed into the Gulf of Mexico, they were obliged, from the exhausted state of their stock, to return. They ascended the Mississippi to its confluence with the Illinois, then paddled up that stream, and crossed over to Michigan. Here they separated. Joliet returned to Quebec, and Marquette remained among the Indians.

In 1678, Robert de la Salle, accompanied by the Chevalier Tonti, arrived at Quebec. He had previously resided in Canada, where he had cultivated a friendship with M. de Frontenac. He also soon embarked in the enterprise of discovery. Accompanied by Father Louis Hennepin, a Flemish Recollet, and M. Tonti, he employed a part of his time in exploring the country, establishing friendly relations with

the savages, and prosecuting the fur trade. They remained during the winter at Niagara ; and in the summer, having built the first ship which had ever navigated Lake Erie, they sailed up that lake and proceeded to Michilimackinac. Hennepin traversed a great part of Illinois, and thence proceeded to the Mississippi, ascending this stream to the Falls of St. Anthony. This party spent about three years in exploring the vast wilderness around the lakes, and encountered the most formidable dangers and hardships. On the second of February, 1682, La Salle reached the Mississippi ; arrived at Arkansas, of which he took formal possession ; and, finally, traced this great highway of the commerce of the western world, to its junction with the Gulf of Mexico. The glorious news of the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi, was carried back by Tonti, and naturally opened fresh hopes to the Canadian colony.

In 1683, the population of the Canadian settlements did not exceed nine thousand. The main check to their operations continued to spring from the hostility of the Iroquois. The Marquis of Denonville was, however, soon appointed Governor-General, and immediately proceeded to Cataraqui with about two thousand troops. From the spirit of uncompromising hatred which was evinced by the Iroquois toward the French, Denonville was determined to strike a decisive blow. An order was accordingly given to condemn all able-bodied men of those tribes, who were taken prisoners, to the galleys ; and to the eternal disgrace of Denonville, a number of the Iroquois chiefs were decoyed to Fort Frontenac by the Jesuit De Lamberville, put in irons, and sent, under this sentence, to France. As might have been expected, this infamous act roused a deeper vengeance in the hearts of the Iroquois ; and the French received full retribution for the injury, in the massacre of their men, women, and children by these tribes, the attack on Fort Frontenac, and the pillage, murder, and conflagration, which were subsequently carried into the upper part of Montreal.

The discovery and settlement of the northern part of the American continent by the English and French, had been nearly contemporaneous. The English had established their settlements along the Atlantic seaboard, and the French occupied, or pretended to occupy, the vast forests around the great lakes, and west of the Alleghany Mountains. Both

held possession of their respective tracts under the authority of their governments, and claimed them on the same grounds, priority of discovery, conquest, and appropriation. Quebec and Montreal, the French forts on the principal Canadian rivers and the Great Lakes, Oswego and Niagara, Le Bœuf and Du Quesne, were at that time the strong-holds of French power, while the English settlements occupied the country now embraced in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and New England.

The operations of the two great Indian confederacies which were leagued respectively with the English and French, are identified with the history of the French establishments. These two families were the Iroquois and Algonquins. The confederacy of the Iroquois, which sided with the English, was called by them "The Six Nations." It was the most powerful league which is known to have existed on the continent. It was first composed of the Onondagas, the Cayugas, the Senecas, the Oneidas, and the Mohawks; in 1712, the Tuscaroras were adopted into the confederation. These tribes were remarkable for their courage, shrewdness, military talent, energy, ambition, and eloquence. They claimed by patrimony or conquest the whole domain of the country, "not occupied by the southern Indians, the Sioux, the Kenistenaux, and the Chippewas, and by the English and French, as far west as the Mississippi and Lake Winnipeg, as far northwest as the waters which unite this lake with Hudson's Bay, and as far north as Hudson's Bay and Labrador."* It is alleged that little of genuine Indian eloquence can be found out of the Iroquois confederacy, and they had more vigor, as well as system in their policy, than the other Indian tribes. Their general interests were managed by a grand council of chiefs, who annually assembled at their central canton, Onondaga. Each nation was divided into three tribes, whose *totems* were the tortoise, the wolf, and the bear. Their councils were conducted with the greatest decorum, solemnity, and deliberation. Governor Clinton in his discourse upon the Iroquois, uses the strong language, that, in "the characteristics of profound policy, they surpassed an assembly of Feudal Barons, and were, perhaps, not far inferior to the great Amphictyonic Council of Greece." Their al-

* Clinton's "Discourse."

leged grounds of controversy with the other tribes were commonly the violation of boundary lines; but, doubtless, the true cause was the love of dominion and glory.

Champlain had formed a league against the Iroquois, when he first came into the country; and Denonville, as we have mentioned, had loaded some of their chiefs with irons, and sent them to the French galleys. They doubtless regarded the inroads of all the whites with jealousy; and we have evidence that their attachment to the English was not strong. "We are born free, we neither depend on Ononchio, or Corlear," [France or England,] said Garangula, an Iroquois chief, to the governor-general of Canada. But their ancient feuds with the Hurons and Algonquins, and the conduct of the French, induced them to ally themselves with their English neighbours; and their marches against the French colonists, and the remote missionary posts, were like the rushing of a storm through their forests.

On the side of the French, was the race of the Algonquins. This race extended, under different names, from the head of Lake Erie, along the upper lakes, north to Lake Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay, and south to the mouth of the Ohio river. They were also connected with the tribes east of the St. Lawrence, and their influence extended to some of the principal tribes of New England. In the leagues of these two powerful families, there were, however, two exceptions. The Wyandotts or Hurons were of the Iroquois stock, but from unknown causes, they had severed from their chain of tribes, and attached themselves to the French; while the Ottagamies or Foxes, who were originally of the Algonquin race, took part with the English. The friendship of the Algonquin tribes for the French was founded on obvious causes. It was the manifest policy of the French to secure their good will, and compacts were made for that object. The French traders advanced to their remotest villages in the prosecution of the fur trade, attended them in their hunting parties and feasts, paid respect to their ceremonies, and became allied with them in marriage. The French were affable, gay, and conciliating in their intercourse, while the English were austere and forbidding. Besides, the Jesuit missionaries exerted no small influence in strengthening the friendship of the Indians for the French. They erected little chapels in their territories, carpeted with Indian mats, and

surmounted by the cross ; took long journeys into the wilderness in their long black robes to perform the imposing ceremonies of the church, and carried with them sculptured images, and paintings connected with sacred history, which the savages viewed with superstitious awe. Added to this, they practised all the arts of kindness and sympathy for the sick, and held up the crucifix to the fading vision of many a dying neophyte.

The French government, when it had once obtained a foothold in Canada, pushed its enterprises into the interior, notwithstanding the enmity of the savages and the hardships of the forest. The colonies which had been sent out from France were composed mainly of thriftless adventurers, gentlemen of slender means, and missionaries of the Church of Rome. In the more remote settlements, rude huts were built, and a few fields were cleared. Quebec and Montreal were the marts of the fur trade, whose operations reached through a large circle, embracing the wilderness, north and west, to Hudson's Bay, beyond the remotest shores of Lake Superior, and extending south to the Gulf of Mexico. The principal establishments made on the northwestern lakes were at Detroit, Chicago, the Falls of St. Mary, Michilimackinac,* St. Joseph, and Green Bay, in the territory of Wisconsin. These establishments were erected for a threefold purpose, trade, religion, and military defence. The forts, surrounded with pickets, and constructed with the rude materials at hand, were built to overawe the Indians, to protect the Jesuits, who generally had their chapels near them, and to serve as *dépôts* of the fur trade.

The wars which broke out between the French and English for the dominion of the country, and the enmity of the Iroquois, soon made it advisable to reappoint the Count de Frontenac to the chief command ; and, in October of 1689, he arrived at Quebec, with the Iroquois chiefs who had been sent to France. But, notwithstanding the energy and address of Frontenac, little was effected in securing the friendship of this confederacy. Vigorous measures were, however, prosecuted, to advance the settlements, and to secure the cultivation of the lands. The fur trade was prosecuted with

* This is the old fort on the peninsula of Michigan, which was destroyed in the Pontiac war, and is distinct from the Island of Mackinaw.

increased success, and the military posts which had been established on the upper lakes were reinforced. In 1698, at the termination of the war between France and England, the English and French Governors entered into amicable arrangements with each other, and also with the Indian tribes, by which peace was for some time preserved.

The Canadian provinces, during the latter period of the French domination, exhibited an extraordinary system of Jurisprudence. Nominally the *Coutume de Paris* was the law of the land, extending its jurisdiction to the remotest points of French settlement around the northwestern lakes. Of course, the legal administration in a new country, little known, separated from the parent state by three thousand miles of ocean, and over a people of mixed character, scattered through an immense wilderness, was extremely loose and arbitrary. The commandants of the remote military posts were invested with a general supervision of the colonists around their forts; a sort of military arbitration, comprising the Legislative, the Judicial, and the Executive powers.* This authority was, however, doubtless exercised with mildness, because the French, who now remain in this region, look back to that era as the golden age of jurisprudence. Subordinate to the Governor-General, the Chief Magistrate of the country, there were under-Governors, Intendants, and a Council. The Governor-General of Quebec was allowed an annual salary of twenty thousand crowns, which included the support of a Company of guards, for his protection, and the garrisoning of the fort. To this sum was added the annual present of a thousand crowns from the "*Farmers of the Beaver skins.*"† He had the control of the military posts, and could bestow commissions on whom he pleased, with the approbation of the King, excepting particular governorships, or the place of a Lord Lieutenant of the Province, or Mayor of any town. He was also empowered to grant to the inhabitants lands and

* This summary jurisdiction was exercised after the conquest of Canada, by the English commandants, sometimes without discretion. We have before us the record of a cause, which was tried under the direction of Governor Hamilton, in 1776, at Detroit, in the plainest violation of established principles of law. For this act, a warrant was issued against Hamilton, and the Justice who tried the cause, by the agency of Lord Dorchester at Quebec; but they both fled the country. It was a capital cause, and the convicted person was executed.

† La Hontan's Voyages.

tenements all over Canada, with the confirmation of the Intendant, and to give twenty-five licenses a year, to such persons as he might select, for trading with the Indians. In criminal jurisdiction, he had the power of granting reprieves. He was, however, not authorized to dispose of the King's money, without the consent of the Intendant, to whom alone belonged the power of drawing it from the "Naval Treasury." Among the privileges of the Governor-General, was that of the exemption from duty of all his wines, and other provisions received from France.

The "Supreme Council" of Canada consisted of twelve members, who had the right of conveying their places to their heirs, subject, however, to the confirmation of the King. They constituted the highest judicial authority, deciding causes without appeal, though, when any complex question came up, they generally had recourse to the aid of the extensive and accurate knowledge of the Jesuits. In making treaties with foreign powers and the Indian tribes, the aid of the Jesuits was likewise commonly in request, on account of their acquaintance with the topography of the country, as well as their great influence with the Indians. Their power, in fact, was felt through every department of the Colonial Government.

When the Baron La Hontan visited Quebec, in 1684, no attorneys or advocates appeared in Court. The litigant parties argued their own causes, and the result was, he says, that suits were quickly brought to a termination. No court fees or other charges were demanded. The judges received four hundred livres a year from the crown, and had a dispensation "of not wearing the robe and the cap." Besides the officers already named, there was also a Lieutenant-General, civil and military, an Attorney-General, a Chief Justice in Eyre, and a Grand Provost. The pay of the inferior officers was small. The Mayor of Quebec was allowed a salary of six hundred crowns; the Governor of Montreal two thousand; the Governor of Trois Rivières a thousand. A chaplain had a hundred and twenty livres a month, a lieutenant ninety, and a common soldier's pay was six sous a day.

The fur trade was the principal subject of mercantile enterprise at that time. The indigent men, who had emigrated from France, in order to prosecute this traffic, were numerous, and their trading posts were established at those points,

where the Indians were in the habit of resorting, on the principal streams, as well as the upper lakes. In fact, this lake region has been the prominent seat of the fur trade, and the scene of its most extraordinary incidents, from that time down to the last meeting of the Northwest Company at Fort William, on the banks of Lake Superior. The principal article of the traffic was beaver skins. It appears, that during the early stages of the French fur trade, there was great improvidence on the part of the Colonial Government in its regulation. The fur-bearing animals were permitted to be killed for amusement, and the Indians, who at first could not appreciate their value, were encouraged to do their part of this waste. The most valuable furs were accumulated at posts, where they could not be disposed of, and were destroyed for want of a market, while the forests were exhausted of that, which has since been found a vast source of national wealth. As the French market was thus glutted with peltries, the merchants declined buying more; and the traders therefore transported a large amount to the English provinces, and had permanent establishments in the Province of New York.* From this traffic arose the class of *Coueurs des bois*, a thriftless and vagrant body of men, who had become habituated to the hardships of the forest and to Indian life. They were accustomed to advance up the northern lakes, to Michilimackinac and even beyond, with their large canoes laden with dry goods and trinkets, and to range the woods of the remote interior, where they could exchange manufactured European articles for furs. The traders procured their licenses as well as goods from the merchants, to whom, on their return, they sold their peltries. Every year they swept down the sparkling waters of the rivers and lakes, with the product of their trade, generally accompanied by fifty canoes of the Hurons and Ottawas, for Montreal, where the Indians sup-

* This diversion of the fur trade to the English posts was viewed with no little jealousy. Charlevoix, at his visit to Detroit, in 1721, wrote as follows. "As for what has been said, that by making a settlement at the Narrows, we should bring the fur trade too much within reach [of the English], there is not a man in all Canada, who does not agree, that we can never succeed in hindering the Indians from carrying them their commodities, let them be settled where they will, and with all the precautions we can possibly take, except by causing them to find the same advantage in trading with us, as in the Province of New York." Charlevoix's Journal, Vol. II. p. 6.

posed they could obtain a better market for their skins, than was offered at Michilimackinac. In the mode we have described, desertions became frequent. Some of the traders absconded to the English posts, and others attached themselves permanently to the savages.

It was in order to prevent this desertion, that a humane as well as judicious plan, to which we have already referred, was devised by the Colonial Government. Licenses to trade were granted to such as were esteemed worthy of confidence, accompanied with the prohibition of all others from going out of the colonies. These licenses were vended to old officers and poor gentlemen, who themselves sold them to the traders according to their value. Their number was regulated by the Court, and their distribution belonged to the Governor General. *Permissions*, of more ample character, were also granted from the same source to the commandants of the forts.

Among the persons, to whom lands had been granted in Canada, were many who could neither be expected to advance agriculture by their own labor, nor had funds sufficient to maintain the necessary workmen upon their domains. It became necessary to provide such estates with tenants, who were obliged to labor hard, and often expended all their advances of money, before they could procure a subsistence. The fur trade, also, which was the great enterprise of that period, diffused a restless and migratory spirit among the people; besides, the progress of agriculture was impeded by the mode of tenure in the distribution of lands. The tenants, holding their farms encumbered with illiberal conditions,* wanted the due motive to industry.

The fur trade was, however, soon taken out of the hands of the Companies, by the French King, and almost everybody embarked in it. This caused the utmost confusion. As early as 1706, the furs were purchased by the Canadian traders, frequently at a higher price than they would command in France. In the English colonies along the Atlantic, there was a more systematic organization. Their goods could be afforded cheaper than those of the French, and their

* We have in our possession, a grant of thirty-two acres, which was made by Antoine de Lamothe Cadillac, Lord of Brouaget and Mondesert, and founder of Detroit, to François Fafard de Lorme, in 1707, to which are annexed *twenty-one conditions*.

operations were conducted with greater judgment. Accordingly, while they were accumulating wealth by the fishery and the fur trade, the French were growing poor.*

The condition of commerce and agriculture among the French at that period, when the forests abounded with all the sources of wealth, exhibits strongly the want of national enterprise and enlightened legislation, on the part of their government. Had the French crown comprehended the full value of the lands, and the furs which abounded in the forests, it might have established penal laws, to prevent the wanton destruction of the fur-bearing animals, organized a liberal system of land distribution, which would have furnished the proper motive to agricultural exertion, and planted in Canada vigorous colonies, which would have poured a broad stream of wealth upon the French empire, and perhaps have perpetuated the dominion of France in this country. It is equally clear, that when none of the precious metals were discovered, the colony was permitted to pine in comparative neglect and barrenness.

Canada also had its paper currency.† As the funds for the payment of the officers and soldiers generally arrived from France too late, local bills were issued, which circulated in the place of coin. By virtue of an ordinance of the Governor and Intendant, this money was made of cards; and its value, the mark of the treasury and the arms of France were stamped upon it in Spanish wax. It was ordained, that these bills should be returned every year into the Canadian Treasury, before the annual arrival of the French ships, in order to receive an additional mark, and to prevent counterfeits. This paper money was however soon disused, and card money substituted, stamped with new impressions. All bills to the value of four livres and upwards were signed by the Intendant, and all below that sum were only marked. At a subsequent period the Governor-General signed those which were of the value of six livres. During the commencement of autumn, these bills were carried back to the treasurer, and bills of exchange were received in return. So long as these bills of exchange were paid, the paper was preferred

* Besides the furs which were annually shipped to France, trade in lumber was carried on to a considerable extent with the West Indies.

† When Henry visited Michilimackinac in 1763, beaver skins were a "circulating medium."

to specie ; but they soon ceased to be honored, and in 1713, they had become so depreciated in value, that the inhabitants proposed to lose one half, in consideration that the King should cause them to be taken up. This was done in 1717. The paper currency was then abolished, and the colonial officers were again paid in current coin.*

As early as 1684, the French colonial establishments in Canada had grown to considerable importance. Quebec, at that time, exhibited some architectural beauty. There were six churches in the "High City," and also a cathedral, consisting of a Bishop and twelve Prebendaries. This was the head-quarters of the Roman Church, and the rendezvous of the priests, who were generally men of correct morals, and contented with the mere necessities of life. Here also was the church of the Jesuits, a massive edifice, containing an altar supported by four great columns of black stone, which La Hontan terms, "a sort of Canada porphyry." The Jesuit fathers had large and stately apartments, looking out upon grounds adorned with groves and gardens, having ice-houses and other expedients of luxury.† At this time, the influence of the church moulded in great measure the policy of the colony. The Directors of the Seminary of St. Sulpicius, at Paris, were the proprietors of the Island of Montreal, and had the right of nominating the bailiff and other subordinate officers. These Directors had, from time to time, sent out to Montreal missionaries from France, who lived under the direction of a Superior, occupying apartments in a large and convenient house built of free stone, and which was constructed on the model of St. Sulpicius at Paris. Cantons on the south side of the island produced a considerable revenue. The land was fertile, and the inhabitants were rich in agricultural products, for which they found a good market in the city.

In 1720, the population of Quebec and Montreal, consisting of nobles, nuns, priests, artisans, traders, and soldiers, had augmented to many thousands. Society was on a footing of luxury and elegance. Time and money were alike thoughtlessly squandered. There were but few rich men in the colony, because wealth which was easily accumulated, was seldom hoarded. During the summer, the colonists embarked in

* Charlevoix's Journal.

† La Hontan's Voyages.

parties of pleasure in their *calashes* or canoes, and in winter they drove their *carioles* upon the snow or skated upon the river. Hunting was practised, not only for sport but profit. No rusticity in language or behaviour was exhibited, from the Bishop to the most obscure menial of the church, from the aristocratic partner to the humblest *voyageur* of the fur trade. The Canadians, says Charlevoix, "drew in with their native breath the air of freedom." The agricultural classes were contented with their lot, while the noblesse, a chivalrous race, boasted of their ancestral honors, and exulted in their own military achievements. The French language was spoken with the utmost accuracy and elegance. At stated intervals, the settlements were enlivened by the traders, who returned from the depths of the wilderness, accompanied by the savages, who would sweep down, across the waters of the upper lakes, hold their carnival in the market-place, and fill the storehouses of the merchants with furs.

We do not design to enter into a minute account of the military operations of that period. They were confined mainly to expeditions against the English colonies and the Iroquois. About the year 1688, these tribes had landed twelve hundred warriors upon the Island of Montreal, and massacred about a thousand of the French; and in a second attack, the lower part of the Island had been devastated. The Council, which had been held with the Iroquois at Onondaga, resulted in no permanent league. The massacre at Schenectady, on the 8th of February, 1690, by a body of two hundred Canadians and Indians, who travelled through a wilderness covered with deep snow, to perpetrate one of the most horrible butcheries on record, was followed by belligerent projects on the part of both nations, which, however, were prosecuted by neither to any important result.

In 1709, England and France being at war, hostilities were re-commenced in their American colonies, which continued until the treaty of Utrecht in 1712. It had been long the effort of the English to obtain a foothold on the northwestern lakes. They had in fact endeavoured, without success, to establish a post at Detroit, for the prosecution of the fur trade. The French establishment, made at Detroit in 1701, had scarce obtained a permanent footing, when the Ottagamies or Foxes were instigated by the Iroquois, probably backed by the English, to attack it. That post was deemed a most im-

portant point, as it commanded a vast region of country along the chain of upper lakes, extending to the Mississippi. The attack of the fort at Detroit, however, was unsuccessful; the besiegers became the besieged; the Foxes, obliged to escape at night during a snow storm, were pursued, and most of their number were either massacred or taken prisoners. This discomfiture of the Foxes prevented the English from making their settlement on the western shore of Lake Erie, as they had intended, in order to secure the trade. After the treaty of Utrecht, the French strengthened their garrison at Detroit, which then commanded the great line of communication along the lakes, embracing the territory of the Illinois, Louisiana, and the Mississippi. In 1714, there were only about four thousand five hundred men in Canada able to bear arms. Subsequent to that time, however, comparative peace was enjoyed by the province; beneficial changes were made in the laws; and the fur trade was prosecuted with increased vigor.

Such, substantially, as we have described it, continued to be the condition of things down to the period of the conquest of Canada by the English.* Hostilities were from time to time committed by the English and French against each others' settlements, backed by Indian allies and bodies of rangers, who were trained by the English to the hardships of the forest, or what was termed the "wood service." The French constantly kept in view the conquest of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, and the devastation of New England; and the English, the subjugation of Canada. At the end of a succession of administrations, the Marquis Du Quesne was in 1755 succeeded by the Sieur de Vaudreuil Cavignal, in the office of Governor-General of Canada. In that year occurred the defeat of Braddock; and in the following, the Marquis de Montcalm advanced with great energy against the English posts. On the other hand, the splendid genius of the Earl of Chatham having projected a vigorous campaign against the French colonies, twelve thousand troops were sent over,

* In 1745, an edict was passed, which accounts for the peculiar form of the old French plantations which are scattered along the banks of the rivers. It ordained, that no country houses should be built on farms of larger dimensions than one acre and a half in front, and forty acres in depth; and in consequence, the settlements were confined along the shores of the principal streams.

under the command of General Amherst. Louisburg, Oswego, and Crown Point were successively captured; and though Ticonderoga was attacked without success, the design of the French to surround the English with a chain of posts from Quebec to the mouth of the Mississippi was baffled, and their ascendancy on this continent was finally overthrown by the defeat of Montcalm on the plains of Abraham by the forces of General Wolfe, and the surrender of Montreal in November, 1760, by the Marquis of Vaudreuil, to General Amherst. By this capitulation, Detroit, Michilimackinac, and all other places within the government of Canada, then remaining in the possession of the French, were surrendered to the crown of England.

The internal condition of Canada was not much changed by its conquest. The fur trade was transferred to the English, who employed French agents in its prosecution, and the French were encouraged to remain in the country, in the enjoyment of their civil and religious rights. Soon after the peace of 1763, Governor Murray established civil and criminal courts, in which the laws of England were introduced. We subjoin an extract from a letter written by him in 1765, to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, which exhibits the condition of the province at that time.

“It consists of 110 parishes, exclusive of the towns of Quebec and Montreal. These parishes contain 9722 houses, and 54,575 Christian souls; they occupy of arable land 955,755 arpents. They sowed, in the year 1765, 180,300½ minots of grain; and that year they possessed 12,546 oxen, 22,724 cows, 15,039 young horned cattle, 27,064 sheep, 28,976 swine, and 13,757 horses, as appears by the annexed recapitulation taken in the year 1765.

“The towns of Quebec and Montreal contain about 14,700 inhabitants. The savages who are called Roman Catholics, being within the limits of the province, consist of 7400 souls; so that the whole, exclusive of the King’s troops, amount to 76,275 souls, of which in the parishes are nineteen Protestant families; the rest of that persuasion (a few half-pay officers excepted) are traders, mechanics, and publicans, who reside in the lower towns of Quebec and Montreal. Most of them were followers of the army, of mean education, or soldiers disbanded at the reduction of the troops. All have their fortunes to make; and I fear few are solicitous about the means, when the end can be obtained. I report them to be, in general, the most immoral collec-

tion of men I ever knew; of course little calculated to make the new subjects enamoured with our laws, religion, and customs, and far less adapted to enforce those laws which are to govern them.

“On the other hand, the Canadians, accustomed to arbitrary, and a sort of military government, are a frugal, industrious, and moral race of men, who, from the just and mild treatment they met with from his Majesty’s military officers, who ruled the country for four years, until the establishment of civil government, had greatly got the better of the natural antipathy they had to their conquerors.

“They consist of a noblesse, who are numerous, and who pique themselves much upon the antiquity of their families, their own military glory, and that of their ancestors. These noblesse are seigneurs of the whole country; and though not rich, are in a situation, in that plentiful part of the world, where money is scarce, and luxury still unknown, to support their dignity. Their tenants, who pay only an annual quit rent of about a dollar for one hundred acres, are at their ease and comfortable. They have been accustomed to respect and obey their noblesse. Their tenures being military, in the feudal manner, they have shared with them the dangers of the field; and natural affection has been increased in proportion to the calamities which have been common to both, from the conquest of this country.” — *McGregor*, Vol. II. pp. 156, 157.

The Canadian jurisprudence was again altered by the law of 1774, denominated the “Quebec Act.” By this measure, the administration of the colony was committed to a governor and council appointed by the English crown; and while the old French laws, according to the *Coutume de Paris*, continued to have authority in civil cases, all criminal matters were ordained to be adjudged by the laws of England. The system of seigniorial revenues was preserved, and the Catholic church was secured in all the immunities which it had enjoyed under the French domination. In 1778, the declaratory act renounced, on the part of the parent country, the right of taxing the colonies. The last important measure, affecting the condition of Canada, prior to the present century, was the “Constitutional Act” of 1791, which divided the province of Quebec into the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, granting to each a legislative government, composed of a Governor, Council, and House of Assembly, while the old French laws, as established by the Quebec Act, were ordained to remain in full force.